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Vice President Darul Uloom Karachi

Memories

(Episode 16)

Construction of Darul Uloom in Sharafi Goth

I have mentioned previously that it was due to the blessings of our respected father's (May Allah's mercy be upon him) sincerity and trust in Allah that only a few months after giving up the land near Allama Usmani's grave, a businessman came to our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) and explained that a friend of his was living in South Africa. He owned some land at a small distance from Karachi, behind Malir in a village known as Sharafi Goth. That land had a few bungalows with servant quarters built on it, and also contained a well. He was willing to donate the land to Darul Uloom on condition that Darul Uloom's construction is promised to be done within five years. When our respected father and Hazrat Maulana Nur Ahmad Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon them both) went to survey the land it was found to be very far away from the city, and filled with sand dunes and shrubs. Also, one had to traverse an arduous route to reach it. No paved road led to this land. The present-day Defence Housing Society, which is located on the road leading up to Korangi Creek, was unimagined at that time. Therefore, after traveling for miles through the desolate Korangi Creek Road, one had to descend into a dirt road (near the place where the Industrial Area's road starts today). Thereafter one had to travel more than five miles on this rough unpaved pathway such that the car, juddering along the bumpy road, could not cross twenty miles per hour. On the other hand the route taken by the bus was also quite strenuous. This was because at that time Korangi Township wasn't even dreamed of, and settlement into Landhi Colony had only recently begun. The last bus stop of Landhi Colony was around one and a half miles away, which entirely consisted of sand dunes and shrubs, and no separate pathway existed for walking.

The truth of the matter is that envisioning the construction of Darul Uloom at that place required extraordinary grit and guts. Only few would have the courage to embark upon this momentous enterprise in that desolate place. Thereafter, respected Haji Ibrahim Dadabhai Sahab donated twenty five acres of that land to Darul Uloom on 19 July 1955 (approximately 28 Dhul Qa'dah 1374H). Later, six additional acres were added, making it a total of 31 acres as a gift from him. (Later when this area was included in Town Planning, the government needed some land from these thirty one acres in order to implement its plans. In exchange for that land, an additional 25 acres of vacant land was received from the government, increasing Darul Uloom's total area to fifty six acres. However, the initial construction began on the twenty five acres.)

Consequently our respected father (May his secret be sanctified), Hazrat Maulana Nur Ahmad Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) and other members of the Board of Trustees, putting their trust in

Allah, began construction at this new place on Friday 30th Rabee' Ath-Thani 1375H, equivalent to 16 December 1955.¹

Haji Abdul Lateef Sahab Bawani (May Allah's mercy be upon him) was a member of the Board of Trustees. Besides worldly wealth, Allah Ta'ala had bestowed on him great devotion for *Deen*. He had pledged 93000 rupees for construction of Darul Uloom on the land near Hazrat Allama Shabbir Ahmad Sahab Usmani's (May Allah's mercy be upon him) grave, about which I have mentioned previously. However, due to the reasons mentioned before, the construction could not take place there. When Darul Uloom received this new piece of land, he took it upon himself to get two buildings of Darul Uloom constructed by his own and his associates' contributions. He fulfilled this undertaking with such valour that we would be left amazed. He would often endure the toilsome journey to Darul Uloom himself, and would personally stand and oversee the construction. Allah Ta'ala had bestowed Hazrat Maulana Nur Ahmad Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) with a penchant for being proactive and getting things done. The harder a job, the more enthusiastically he would accomplish it. Consequently, he toiled day and night to get the building ready in as short a time as possible. And with the grace and favour of Allah Ta'ala the construction of two blocks, facing each other, was completed in the short span of ten months; one for students' accommodation and the other one for classrooms.

At the same time, construction of this Darul Uloom, located in the middle of nowhere, had to be brought up to such a level, at the very least, as to allow classes to begin from the next academic year. But a serious impediment to beginning classes cropped up; those teachers on whom the classes at Nanak Warah depended upon to a large extent were leaving from the next year. This was because in that same year Hazrat Maulana Sayyid Muhammad Yusuf Binnori Sahab (May his secret be sanctified) was laying foundation to a new Madrasa in the Jami Masjid of New Town, which is today *Masha Allah* counted among the most prestigious Madrasas of Pakistan. Hazrat Maulana Fazal Muhammad Sahab, Hazrat Maulana Mufti Wali Hasan Sahab and Hazrat Maulana Badeeuz Zaman Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon them all) had promised to serve as teachers there. Hazrat Maulana Muntakhabul Haq Sahab and Hazrat Maulana Mazhar Baqa Sahab had become affiliated to the Faculty of Islamic Studies of Karachi University. Hazrat Maulana Ubaidul Haq Sahab had moved to Dhaka. It was not easy to find replacements who could fill their shoes. Furthermore, our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) had been personally teaching a major portion of Sahih Bukhari. Owing to his numerous engagements pertaining to matters of the city, it was not possible for him to continue teaching after moving to Darul Uloom's new building. As a result, quite a large number of new teachers were required to begin classes in the new building of Darul Uloom.

At the same time, our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) always adopted the principle of not inviting any teacher who was already teaching at another Madrasa to join his Madrasa. He considered this inappropriate, and used to say that it is improper to ruin one Madrasa in order to develop another; with the exception of a teacher who, at his own initiative, wanted to leave his Madrasa.

¹ This date is recorded on page 87 of Darul Uloom's gazette of Ramadan 1373H to Shaban 1374H, equivalent to May 1954 to April 1955.

But with the grace and favour of Allah the Glorious and Most High, a solution to this quandary emerged in the form of our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) being informed of some teachers who wished to leave the Madrasas they were teaching at. There was thus nothing wrong in inviting them. Consequently, Hazrat Maulana Ubaidullah promised to come from Bahawalpur; Hazrat Maulana Mufti Rasheed Ahmad Sahab from Therhi; Hazrat Maulana Akbar Ali Sahab from Mazahirul Uloom Saharanpur; and Hazrat Maulana Saleem Ullah Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon them all) from Tando Allahyar. In addition, Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Idrees Sahab Meerathi (May Allah's mercy be upon him), who until now used to prepare students for the exams of *As-Sunnah Sharqiyyah* at Idara Sharqiyyah at Jacob Line, also promised to teach some classes as a volunteer. Furthermore, Hazrat Maulana Shamsul Haq Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) was a young man at the time and had freshly graduated from Jamiya Ashrafiya Lahore. He also decided to render his services in Darul Uloom. Similarly, our paternal cousin Hazrat Maulana Khurshid Alam Sahab had also graduated from Darul Uloom Deoband in those days. Our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) invited him from Deoband as well. And in this manner the issue of shortage of teachers was largely resolved.

Relocation to Sharafi Goth

Until now we had been getting our education while staying at home; we would go to the Madrasa in the morning every day and return in the evening. But after the Madrasa shifted to its new building, this routine was no longer possible, because the new building was quite far away from our house and it took hours to reach it. In order to continue our education there, we thus were to stay at the students' hostel at the Madrasa the entire week. I had never stayed away from home until now. On top of that, our house had only recently been built, and we had been able to enjoy its comforts for barely a year. I was in the fourteenth year of my life, and the thought of staying away from my parents was agonizing enough on its own. But there was no other option to continue our education. We therefore moved to the students' accommodation in Darul Uloom. The students' hostel consisted of two blocks in those days. We stayed in room number 16 at a corner of the Eastern Block (that block is part of the *Madrasatul Banat* (Girls' Madrasa) today). Two rooms from ours, under the dome, was a bigger room. Rooms under the dome were exclusively allotted to teachers. And Hazrat Maulana Shamsul Haq Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) was residing in that room. He was a young man at the time, and had freshly graduated and started teaching. For a few days, our lessons of *Husami* were also assigned to him, so he was one of our teachers. However, he was quite affable and good-natured, and had made us so frank with himself that he had become more a friend to us than a teacher.

This was the first time in our life that we moved out from our home, and shifted to this new building of Darul Uloom in Sharafi Goth. At the time two blocks had been finished, including paint works; one located to the south which contained fifteen rooms for student accommodation, and the second one on the northern side facing the first block (where Bab Fatima of the new Masjid is situated today). Initially it consisted of twelve classrooms. Later, after the addition of two round rooms, the number increased to fourteen classrooms.

About a hundred yards separated the two blocks, which were entirely filled with sand dunes and shrubs. Besides accommodating snakes and scorpions, these sand dunes and shrubs were also home to

chameleons, iguanas, hedgehogs and sand lizards, and God knows how many other kinds of wild animals. They feared us during the day while we feared them during the night, because this was their time to get some fresh air. Scorpions in particular used to roam freely after Isha prayer, and perhaps finding this the opportune time to take revenge for what they went through during the day, they would often sting some student in the foot. Screams of some student would often be heard after Isha, and we would learn that some scorpion had stung him. With neither a doctor nor a hospital nearby, various traditional remedies would be tried out. Someone suggested that immersing a dead scorpion in oil transformed the oil into an antidote for the sting. Consequently, this was experimented on several students, and also proved to be somewhat effective. But after all experiments, the cure recognized as the most effective was to get some child to shoot a jet stream of urine on the wound of the sting. Thus, whenever someone was stung by a scorpion, a child would be brought to the victim and made to urinate on demand.

Across the eastern side of the South Block, beyond a small space left for a street, lay a third unfinished block which was still pending for paint works. Located on the western corner of this block was a Room Number 16 which was provided to us for our accommodation. We two brothers and our nephew Hakeem Musharraf Husain Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) resided there. We brought three small *charpais* and put them in the room. Government-installed water taps had not reached Darul Uloom, and the ancient well situated within the precincts of Darul Uloom was unpotably salty. As a result, water for our daily use used to come from a well in Sharafi Goth which was around a mile away. A donkey cart was bought to transport the water. The task of bringing the water on the donkey cart, laden with a large tank, was assigned to a perky young man whom we used to call Musa Bahishti. He would bring water two to three times every day and, standing in the middle of students' accommodation, would yell out: "*Paani!*" ("Water!") Rather his accent made it sound more like "*Paanri*". Hearing this call we would bring our *Gharas* (earthen water-pots) and *Surahis* (long-necked clay flasks) to the donkey cart, and Musa Bahishti would fill our vessels one by one.

Though even this water was not entirely sweet, it was still drinkable. Water would be stored in *Surahis* for drinking and in *Gharas* for ablution etc., and would be transferred into *Lotas* (ewers) for ablution. Later, when we wished for some luxury, we put a small cistern in the hall outside our room, whereafter it became easy to do ablution under its tap, and to wash hands, etc. But if ever its water ran out, there would be no other immediate solution except to make do with the salty water from the well inside the Madrasa, until Musa Bahishti arrived with the water.

An additional perk of the donkey cart was that whenever a VIP guest would be arriving in Darul Uloom using the bus, the donkey would be dispatched to the bus stop to spare the guest the long walk from Landhi to Darul Uloom, and would thus arrive in this VIP carriage instead. The sick would also be bestowed this royal treatment.

An electricity connection was out of the question in this remote area. But May Allah Ta'ala shower His mercies upon Hazrat Maulana Nur Ahmad Sahab. During the initial days he had somehow arranged for a small generator and installed it in Darul Uloom. This was a peculiar generator which made the light bulbs shimmer while it was turned on; meaning the brightness of the electric bulbs would constantly change

from bright to faint every moment. However, the loudness of its roar remained unaffected. We would be grateful for this generator in this middle of nowhere, and recognized its true value when, only a few weeks later, it reached the end of its life and became incurable. And this wilderness returned to its status quo.

We kept a lantern in our room, whose oil could be received by queuing up. The responsibility of keeping its chimney clean and replacing its wick when it was used up was assigned to me. We would study by sitting around this lantern. We bought another lantern when my respected brother's and my groups of *Takrar* became separate. We would take our own lanterns to a classroom and conduct *Takrar* therein. On the other hand, a gas cauldron would be lighted in the Masjid around which students would sit, and the need for light for study and *Takrar* would be fulfilled collectively.

A *roti* per student would be provided for breakfast from the kitchen, and we had to heat our own tea or milk. We had weaned ourselves off tea, and would eat *roti* with milk instead. Buffalo milk was not available. Cow's milk had to be brought from a kilometer away from Goth. Either the late respected Hakeem Musharraf Husain Sahab or I would carry out the service of bringing the milk. It took a long time to get used to its taste. An old kerosene oil stove was available to heat the milk during breakfast and lunch or dinner. The burner of this stove would spoil frequently, and igniting it was a rather grueling endeavour.

The geographic location of the Madrasa was such that a desert stretched towards the west for miles; until reaching the sea, there existed neither a house nor a building nor a tree. Though occasional wild shrubs could be spotted strewn over the desert, they would be extremely sandy. Westerly winds blew into the Madrasa all year round, and would carry grains of sand with them. Sometimes dust storms would form during summer, and would persist for days. Nothing beyond one yard could be seen during such storms, and everything in the room, including our beds, would be blanketed by a thick layer of sand.

To the south as well, a desert stretched for around a mile, but rows of wild trees could be spotted here and there. The neighbourhood of Landhi Colony 6, which was only just beginning to get populated, began after the mile long forest.

However, at some distance to the east of the Madrasa was a date garden, and a series of gardens continued till far beyond. To the north as well, after traversing the desert for some distance, agricultural land and gardens began. And to the northeast was the village which was known as Sharafi Goth. It began with a small restaurant, which looked more like a shed and which used to be called "Sheedal" restaurant after the name of its owner. Beyond this restaurant were some houses, in the middle of which was the well from which we used to receive our water.

The normal route from the city to Darul Uloom was to take Bus Number 47 from Lea Market, which would reach Landhi via Drigh Road and Malir, and would go through the entire Landhi Colony before reaching the stop at Landhi Number 6. This bus passed through Lasbela House but it would reach Malir after going through numerous stops, and would wait at Malir for a long time. This route would therefore take two to three hours to reach Landhi Number 6. Thereafter would start the approximately one-and-a-

half mile long walk through the forest to the south of Darul Uloom. Thus a total travel time of three to four hours was not out of the ordinary. And if ever it rained while walking across this forest, there would be no place to take shelter. And rain did chance upon us while we were crossing this forest. Not only did the clothes we were wearing become drenched, even the clothes in our bags, which were supposed to last us the entire upcoming week, were soaked up. May Allah Ta'ala shower His mercies upon Hazrat Maulana Shamsul Haq Sahab. Seeing us arriving in that state from the back window of his room under the dome, he beckoned us to his room and provided us with temporary dry clothes.

The second route to Sharafi Goth was to take Bus Number 52, which ran its service two or three times a day from Lea Market. It would go to Chakra Goth (where Korangi Number 1 is located today) via Kala Pull and Korangi Road, and from there would take a dirt track to Sharafi Goth itself. If ever we caught this bus it would be nothing less than a blessing out of the blue, because with it we saved time and also had to walk less. But to catch it one had to reach Lea Market at a specific time. If one missed the window for reaching Lea Market, this bus would be missed and the only fall-back option would be the same Bus Number 47, and the journey would thus be extended.

On reaching Darul Uloom we would be cut off from the rest of the world, because no phone connection was available nearby. Just two or three days after moving here, Hakeem Musharraf Husain Sahab caught Influenza. The fever reached such heights that he became delirious. No reliable treatment was available nearby so it was decided to inform his family and send him home. But there were no means at hand to inform his family. Eventually *Bhai Sahab* (Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Rafi Sahab (May his shade be extended)) rented a bicycle, mount me behind and, cycling through the forests, called home from a Police Station near Babar Market. Thereafter he called a taxi and sent him home.

Maulana Abdur Rahman Sahab Faizabadi (May Allah's mercy be upon him) was a year ahead of us, and was supposed to be in *Dawra-e-Hadith* that year. But Hazrat Maulana Nur Ahmad Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) had sent him to this place at a time when only a security guard and some goats resided here. Furthermore, he assigned all kinds of administrative duties to him and also got him married to a Burmese lady. May Allah Ta'ala bestow His special grace upon both husband and wife. In that extremely difficult phase of Darul Uloom, they had taken up such responsibilities of the entire Darul Uloom upon themselves which only a true homemaker can accomplish. He would be the one taking care of everything from overseeing the construction works to fulfilling all kinds of needs of students and teachers. Whenever someone faced any problem he would look for none other than Hazrat Maulana Abdur Rahman Sahab. His sole helper was a security guard whose real name, we learned much later, was Abdul Aziz. Everyone called him "Lala". He was a perky young Pathan and was friends with all students. He used to speak very fast, but would protect even the minutest belongs of Darul Uloom as a mother bird protects her nest.

During our first few days in Darul Uloom, Maulana Abdur Rahman Sahab Faizabadi (May Allah's mercy be upon him) felt that since we were accustomed to eating home food, we may not be able to cope with food from the Madrasa's kitchen. He thus proposed to our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him), after getting agreement from his wife, to have our meals prepared at his house. Our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) accepted this proposal on condition that the expenses would be

borne by him. Consequently our meals began coming from his house for some time. May Allah Ta'ala recompense both husband and wife the best rewards; despite their unquestionable sincerity, taking this favour from them as a regular arrangement weighed heavily upon us. Our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) therefore discontinued this arrangement after some time, and told us:

"*Alhamdulillah* I can afford to hire someone to cook separately for you. But my heart desires that you eat the same food that other students eat, so that you can truly taste the life of a seeker of knowledge, and can attain the blessings thereof." We happily accepted this and would thereafter buy food from the Madrasa's kitchen.

In those days the kitchen used to be in a garage-like room to the south-east of Darul Uloom. This room had no door, and a scrap of tin draped over its walls served as the roof. Towards its north was a *Tandoor* (kiln), beside which a stove or two, lit by firewood or coal, served to cook the gravy. The daily menu consisted of *Chana Daal* (split chickpeas) in the afternoon and a watery broth in the evening. But Mahmood the cook was such a craftsman that a tantalizing earthy aroma emanated from that extremely thin broth, which I still miss today. Since the kitchen had no door, particles from the sand outside would often find their way into whatever was being cooking, be it *Roti*, *Daal* or broth. Respected Maulana Mujeebur Rahman Sahab Momin Shahi (May his shade be extended), who is currently residing in Dhaka, was the manager of the kitchen. May Allah Ta'ala grant him success in both the worlds; he would exercise great financial judiciousness in managing the kitchen. In those days, transporting necessities to this remote desert was a considerable challenge, but he would fulfill his duties with great diligence. At the same time, he could neither control the sand-carrying winds nor could he exceed the allotted budget.

Our respected mother (May Allah's mercy be upon her) would send us *Ghee* every week. We would use it to fry our *rotis* in breakfast, and would put it in the *Daal* for lunch for as many days as it would last us. Hazrat Maulana Shamsul Haq Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him), who was a young man at the time and was residing in the room adjacent to ours, taught us to fry small pieces of the *roti* in Ghee, put them in the *Daal*, and then to heat the *Daal*. This recipe made the *Daal* twice as delicious. Consequently this would be our special meal whenever we got the opportunity to prepare it. Sometimes we would visit fields of green chilies and pluck some with the owner's permission. These would serve to add taste to the *Daal*.

Acquainting ourselves to this life of isolation after having lived a royal life at home, and cutting ourselves off from our luxurious urban life into this tough rural environment was no less than a *mujaahadah* (struggle) for us. I was around fourteen years old and had never had to live away from my bustling household of parents, brothers and sisters. Thus, during the initial days I would secretly cry to myself. But Allah Ta'ala has created man's nature such that once he firmly resolves to carry out something which is (initially) difficult for him, it gradually becomes a habit and, eventually, the difficulty also lessens. It was clear to us that we had to do this at all costs to improve our education. We thus braced our minds for this, and in time we blended ourselves into this environment to such an extent that soon we contrived new means for our relaxation and entertainment in this very environment. And I can say this without fear of rebuttal, at least for myself, that had I not undergone those small inconveniences at the time, then, though I remain ignorant today, I would have turned out an even bigger ignorant.

We spent the first few months in the same Room Number 16 of the student hostel. Later a patron of Darul Uloom, Haji Kabeer Ud Deen Sahab, who was a businessman from East Pakistan, built a small two-room house near the classrooms and donated it to Darul Uloom. This was also to serve as his residence whenever he visited Karachi. He proposed to us to move into one of the rooms. We thus moved into that house. This small house was far apart from other buildings. Being near to our classrooms, we would not feel its isolation during the day. But dead silence would enshroud us at night. Albeit a dirt track passed by the northern side of this house, along which some camel cart would trundle along once in a while, and the ringing of bells around their necks would be the only sound heard in the silence. Other than this, especially in the cold winter nights, hyenas would often besiege our house, and we could hear their screams till late into night. But this house, owing to its relatively bigger size, was more comfortable, and the greatest facility was a bathroom located right outside the rooms. We thus did not need to use the common bathrooms. Later, when our paternal cousin respected Maulana Khurshid Alam Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) graduated from Deoband and joined as a teacher here, one room was allotted to him. This room would serve as his classroom during the day and his residence at other times. And we two brothers and Maulana Hakeem Musharraf Husain Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) stayed in the other room. Since this house was close to the classrooms, several other teachers would also sometimes stop by to take rest in between classes.

Rural life, while comprising some hardships, offers some unique benefits which cannot be acquired in urban life. As I have mentioned before, the location of Darul Uloom was such that to its west was a bleak and barren desert until one reached the sea, but to its east was a vast lush garden. Beyond that was a beautiful orchard, with trees of various fruits such as *chikoo* (sapodilla), guava, lemon, etc. lined in a beautiful orderly pattern. This was called the garden of Pir Bakhsh. Besides this, until about a kilometer to the north of Darul Uloom, were gardens of chilies and other vegetables. And beyond them began Sharafi Goth. At the farther end of Sharafi Goth is a government-owned farm for animal breeding. It is known as Cattle Farm to this day. Besides raising and breeding high breed oxen, various scientific experiments would also be conducted therein. This cattle farm owned vast tracts of land; to the south were thriving lush gardens, extending for miles, for the cattle to graze. They extended up to where Shah Faisal Colony is located today. These spectacles of nature were simply not available in city life. Thus after Asar prayer, having studied for the entire day, we would enjoy those scenes of nature in various ways.

I have made a mention of my nephew Hakeem Musharraf Husain Sahab several times. He was two years older than me, but I was his maternal uncle and was a year ahead of him in class. My younger age was therefore offset by being his uncle, as a result of which he was my only friend who was with me in everything from the time we used to play together in our childhoods to our life in Madrasa. The two of us would go out from the Madrasa after Asar, our first stop being Goth. Here, we would first have tea at a shed-like restaurant, known as "*Sheedal Hotel*" after its owner, and thereafter head out for the fields and gardens. Guavas in those gardens were especially pleasant smelling and succulent, and the landowner would allow us to hand-pluck them at eight *Annas* (half a rupee) per kilo. How could one enjoy such pleasure in the city? Having spent our time after Asar in that rejuvenating verdure, we would return to our Madrasa, light the lantern, and, until Isha, pore over our lessons for the next day such that nothing would distract us from our perusal. After Isha we would heat our food, bought from the

Madrasa's kitchen, which would often be thin, soupy gravy. One benefit of it being thin as water was that if ever we spilled it on our clothes (which would happen often to me), removing its stains would not require much effort. We would have it with *Tandoori Naan*, bought before Asar, and, with pangs of hunger gnawing at our stomachs, had come to find it tasty. Immediately after would be our time for *Takrar*, which would continue under the burning lantern late into the night.

During our initial days in Darul Uloom our classmates had formed a volley ball team. We used to play after Asar, and besides us students Hazrat Maulana Shamsul Haq Sahab and Hazrat Maulana Khurshid Alam Sahab (May Allah have mercy upon them both) would also join us. Hazrat Mufti Rasheed Ahmad Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) told us: "If you were to play "*Banot*" instead of volleyball, I will also join you."

"*Banot*" was a game played with sticks, which comprised a rather impressive demonstration of the art of wielding and fighting with a stick. An expert of "*Banot*" can single-handedly deal with an entire crowd. This game used to be taught in Darul Uloom Deoband and had a dedicated teacher for it. Hazrat Mufti Sahab had learnt this art there, and all four of my elder brothers used to practice it since their time in Deoband. And our eldest brother respected Muhammad Zaki Kaifi was considered a decent master of this art. Thus, as a result of Hazrat's campaigning, we practiced *Banot* after Asar for some time.

We had received training for civil defense and first aid during our studies in Nanak Warah. Thereafter, we desired to receive formal military training. When we presented this request to our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) he sought the services of a retired military inspector, and to the best of my memory, we began receiving training from him after Asar from 10 August 1958. He began by teaching us how to do parade, and thereafter conducted practice sessions for techniques of subduing an enemy. He also taught us how to climb up buildings and walls, and then moved on to techniques of climbing them while carrying the injured. Finally he taught us, using artificial guns, how to use firearms. But this training only continued for a short period and was thereafter discontinued.

That year, we were to study *Mulla Hasan*, *Tasreeh* and *Siraji* under Hazrat Maulana Mufti Rasheed Ahmad Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him); *Hidaya Akheereen* and *Meebazi* under Hazrat Maulana Saleem Ullah Khan Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him); *Tawdeeh* under Hazrat Maulana Akbar Ali Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him); *Sharh Aqaid* and *Husoon Hameediyah* under Hazrat Maulana Qari Riayatullah Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him); and *Deewan Hamasa* under Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Idrees Sahab Meerathi (May Allah's mercy be upon him).

All of these respected teachers MashaAllah, in their knowledge, scholarship and wonderful style of teaching, were one better than the other. And their captivating lectures had imbued beauty into this tough desert lifestyle.

I have already mentioned about Hazrat Maulana Mufti Rasheed Ahmad Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) in *Nuqoosh-e-Raftagan*. The reality is that we owe a lot to him. Three of our classes were assigned to him that year; *Mulla Hasan*, *Siraji* and *Tasreeh*.

I have mentioned before that after *Sharh Tahzeeb* I did not find much interest in higher books of *mantiq* (logic). But Hazrat's fascinating style of teaching made even those books interesting. It was not my habit to prepare for lessons of *mantiq* beforehand, but I would prepare for *Mulla Hasan* beforehand, and would also listen to the lecture attentively, and would later also do *Takrar*. In this way, there was a considerable improvement in the weaknesses I noticed in my knowledge of *mantiq*.

The second book was *Siraji*, which is a famous book on the topic of Islamic laws of inheritance. Hazrat had himself written a book on inheritance, named "*Tasheel Ul Meerath*", in which he had described the laws of inheritance in an easy-to-understand manner. Furthermore, he had also devised a methodology, based on mathematical techniques, for calculating the shares of inheritance, which was different than the old methodology. Instead of teaching us *Siraji*, Hazrat taught us the foundations of the laws of inheritance based on "*Tasheel Ul Meerath*", and gave us extensive practice exercises, to the extent that we were able to solve complex problems of inheritance very easily. Later, studying *Siraji* became easy for us.

The third important class under Hazrat was *Tasreeh*. Besides *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), Hazrat possessed extraordinary prowess at astronomy and mathematics, and we greatly benefitted from this expertise during our classes of *Tasreeh*. After *Tasreeh*, Hazrat also taught us, as an additional text beyond the syllabus and on his own initiative, a part of "*Khulasatul Hisab*", and also trained us in the use of the astrolabe, the sine quadrant, and the astrolabe quadrant. (These were ancient instruments used for measurements in astronomy and geography.) *Tasreeh* covers Ptolemaic astronomy, which Hazrat would explain using a ball. Side by side, he would also explain modern Pythagorean theories and concepts.

The teacher of teachers, Hazrat Maulana Saleem Ullah Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him), was in his youth at the time. He was a student of Shaykhul Islam Hazrat Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani (May Allah's mercy be upon him), and after having served as a teacher in my second Shaikh Hazrat Maulana Maseeh Ullah Khan Sahab's (May his secret be sanctified) Madrasa Miftahul Uloom in Jalalabad for a long time, had come to Pakistan with the intention of permanently settling here. That year two of our books, *Hidaya Akheereen* and *Meebazi*, were under him. If my memory serves me right, the first day, having attended the other classes during the day, his class of *Meebazi* was in the evening. Thus the very first class we attended under him was of *Meebazi*. I was naturally not inclined to philosophy and *mantiq* (logic) and would suffice with the compulsory books thereof. As for philosophy, this was the first and last book I studied. May Allah Ta'ala bestow His special favours upon him in both the worlds. He delivered the very first lecture with such charm that I became intensely fond of both book and teacher, and, as opposed to my previous habit, I studied *Meebazi* the entire year with hard work and great zeal. The second class under him was *Hidaya Akheereen*. That too, MashaAllah, went greatly well. Hazrat (May Allah's mercy be upon him) had studied *Hidaya Akheereen* under Shaykhul Adab wal Fiqh Maulana Aizaz Ali Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him), due to which he relished to follow the footsteps of his teacher. He would therefore always arrive punctually to class, and would deliver the lecture for two continuous hours. He would inundate us with his ever-smiling face and captivating style of speaking, such that we would end the lesson without a trace of tiredness.

Our third teacher that year was Hazrat Maulana Akbar Ali Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him). He was a highly competent and well-loved teacher at Mazahirul Uloom Saharanpur; well-liked by Shaykhul Hadith Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him), and oft-present in the gatherings of Hakeem Ul Ummah Hazrat Thanvi (May Allah's mercy be upon him). It was our good fortune that he decided to migrate to Pakistan, and accepted to teach at Darul Uloom. A specialty of his style of teaching was that he would demystify the most abstruse topics, such that the student's mind would not be burdened much. His lecture would be so well-arranged and gripping that were it to be penned down word-for-word, it could be published as an engrossing read, without needing much editing. "*Tawdeeh*", the book on principles of jurisprudence, was assigned to him that year, and he taught us in such a simplistic manner that we didn't even realize that this is supposed to be a difficult book. It was much later, when I had to teach it myself, that I realized that the book is not as easy as we considered it to be while attending his classes. May Allah Ta'ala have infinite mercy on him.

We were fortunate to welcome an additional prized addition to the teachers of Darul Uloom that year. Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Idrees Sahab Meerathi (May Allah's mercy be upon him) was running an educational institute by the name of "*Idarah Sharqiyyah*" at Jacob Line at the time, in which students were prepared for exams of Eastern languages (Arabic for the exam of *Fazil-e-Arabi*, Persian for the exam of *Fazil-e-Farsi*, Urdu for the exam of *Fazil-e-Urdu*, etc.). However, he wished to serve as a teacher at a Madrasa in which the *Dars-e-Nizami* curriculum was taught. That year, he expressed his desire to teach at Darul Uloom as a volunteer. I have mentioned before that in those days, one had to undergo a strenuous journey to travel from the city to the new building of Darul Uloom. But Hazrat made this great sacrifice every day by travelling from the city until Landhi bus stop, and then walking the last mile to Darul Uloom. He was highly habituated to having tea and *paan*, but it was difficult to arrange for them in that remote place at the time. He would therefore bring along a supply of their ingredients with himself. We studied "*Deewan Hamasa*" under him that year. And the great diligence with which he taught us that book is among the pleasant memories of our student life. He would not only explain the poems in *Hamasa* with excellent elucidation of the meanings of Arabic idioms and proverbs, but would also vividly describe the entire tribal and cultural outlook of life before and at the beginning of Islam.

That year, instead of forming a big group for *Takrar*, students were paired up instead. Among our classmates, we had become especially close with two Burmese students, because they used to cook very tasty fish. They had also invited us over once or twice. We loved it so much that later, if a long time would pass since the last time we had it, we would ourselves request them to invite us over. One of them was Maulana Muhibbullah Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him), and the other was Maulana Mufti Abdullah Sahab (May his shade be extended) (who is a teacher and a supervisor for *Takhassus Fil Iftaa* (specialization in issuing *Fatwas*) at Darul Uloom nowadays). Maulana Muhibbullah Sahab fell in the share of my elder brother Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Rafi Sahab (May his shade be extended), while Mufti Abdullah Sahab had to cope with me. Perhaps out of consideration for me, he asked me to do the *Takrar*, and I accepted the offer without any formalities. Consequently, I would take a small lantern, flickering and fluttering in my hand, after Isha to a corner of an under-construction round room in the middle of the classrooms. Maulana would arrive here as well, and I would be the one doing *Takar* for all the books. With regards to Burmese students, I have experienced that the intelligent and capable among

them would be really brilliant and competent. Maulana (May his shade be extended) would quietly listen to my *Takrar* and would never say a single word during it. May Allah Ta'ala forgive me. I misconstrued this to be due to his lack of understanding of the lesson. One day I could not attend the lesson of *Meebazi* due to some reason. The lesson that day was about "*Burhan Sullami*" which was considered quite a difficult topic. After the lesson, when I tried to fathom it by going through the reading material, I could not. When it was time for *Takrar*, I told Maulana Abdullah Sahab: "I couldn't attend the lesson today, and neither could I comprehend it enough by going through the reading material as to conduct its *Takrar*, so you do its *Takrar* today." Owing to his taciturn personality and my above-mentioned misapprehension, I feared he may give some excuse or shy away. But I was pleasantly surprised when Maulana immediately accepted this. And when he conducted the *Takrar* that day, his true brilliance shone through. He presented that rather abstruse topic in such a fascinating manner that I grasped all the points which I could not fathom before. I still remember the joy I felt at his *Takrar* that day. May Allah Ta'ala keep him safe with '*aafiyah* and continuously increase his ranks. My love for him, which first began in the days that we used to do *Takrar* together, has only increased since then. Besides his vast knowledge, I always envied him for his love for worship, his *Zuhd* (avoiding overindulgence in worldly pleasures) and *Taqwa* (fear of Allah), and his unflinching resoluteness. His unwavering determination can be gauged by the fact that he memorized the Noble Quran in the very year of *Dawra-e-Hadith*. Even today, he is not only a teacher of Hadith in Darul Uloom, but is also among the most respected companions in Darul Ifta. He is the one supervising *Takhassus Fil Iftaa* (specialization in issuing *Fatwas*).

In brief, this academic year of ours came to an end thus. And the following were my results in the annual exams:

Subject	Marks
<i>Tasreeh</i>	50
<i>Hamasa</i>	50
<i>Meebazi</i>	47
<i>Tawdeeh</i>	50
<i>Mulla Hasan</i>	47
<i>Hidaya Akheereen</i>	50
<i>Siraji</i>	49
<i>Husami</i>	45